

HYATTSVILLE, MD - Federal and county officials representing Prince George's and Montgomery Counties announced a new Joint County Gang Initiative today that will streamline prevention and suppression operations between the two jurisdictions and enhance regional efforts to keep communities safe and prevent youth from engaging in gang activity. A [\\$2.7 million federal investment](#) for the initiative was recently secured by Reps. Hoyer, Van Hollen and Edwards in a FY2010 federal appropriations bill. Officials announced the new effort at the [Langley Park Community Center](#) in Hyattsville, chosen to emphasize the importance of prevention through youth programs and activities that provide children and young adults with safe alternatives to crime and gang membership.

Combating gang activity continues to be a top public safety priority in the Washington Metropolitan Region. The approved funding will provide additional resources for a joint **Prince George's County-Montgomery County Gang Prevention and Suppression Task Force that will coordinate** law enforcement activities and provide program support for prevention and intervention efforts. The program will be administered through the [University of Maryland Public Safety Training and Technical Assistance Program](#).

"I am pleased to stand here today to announce an enhanced anti-gang effort on the part of our counties to protect our communities and youth from the influences of gang activity," **said Congressman Steny H. Hoyer.** "Gang violence must be addressed in a comprehensive way, both in the approaches we use and in coordination across jurisdictional lines. This federal funding will provide a significant opportunity to enhance gang prevention and suppression initiatives in Prince George's and Montgomery Counties, as well as bolster anti-gang efforts throughout the Washington Metropolitan Region."

"With an estimated 10,000 gang members currently in Maryland, Virginia, and DC, gang violence is a problem we must address head on - it has already taken too many lives and destroyed too many families," **said Congressman Van Hollen.** "We are committed to working with our state and local partners to combat gang activity in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties, and this federal funding is a critical component of this effort."

"As gang activity continues to rise in our area, it is having a devastating effect on the lives of many of our youth and the communities they live in," **said Rep. Donna F. Edwards.** "I am pleased to join my colleagues in securing \$2.7 million in federal funding to develop

the joint Prince George's County-Montgomery County Gang Prevention and Suppression Task Force.

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I am confident that the additional resources for our local police departments to coordinate law enforcement activities and provide program support for prevention and intervention efforts will make a significant impact in reducing gang activity in both Prince George's and Montgomery Counties."

"I want to thank Congressman Hoyer and all of our federal partners for securing \$2.7 million for the gang task force," **said County Executive Jack Johnson.** "The funding we receive today will help us continue our record crime reductions."

"I want to thank Congressmembers Van Hollen, Edwards and Hoyer for their great work in obtaining more funding for our County efforts to aggressively fight gangs and intervene with at-risk youth," **said County Executive Ike Leggett.** "We will put these resources to good use on the front lines of that battle."

More than ever, gang activity is threatening suburban and rural areas to expand their networks for new members and areas for drug distribution. [Department of Justice's 2009 National Gang Threat Assessment](#) found that there are 2,900 criminally-active gangs and 73,650 members of national- and street-level gangs in the East Region, which includes the Washington Metropolitan Area. The Gang Threat Assessment also noted law enforcement in this region have effectively disrupted many of MS-13's networks by targeting drug distribution and money laundering networks, and was most recently demonstrated in November when local law enforcement indicted 19 Latin Kings gang members. With the support of organizations providing constructive outlets for youth, the joint county initiative will help the region make further progress toward reducing the threat of gangs in area communities in a comprehensive way.

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